



# Smart Growth, NJ

Fall 2003

## Greetings from Governor McGreevey & Commissioner Levin

Since taking office, this administration has been committed to planning for New Jersey's future through Smart Growth. Through the Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Office of Smart Growth (OSG) alone, we have awarded more than \$2.5 million in Smart Future Planning Grants in 11 counties that will affect more than 70 towns in our state. And it's just the beginning.

DCA's OSG is committed to ensuring that we find a balance among new development, redevelopment and economic development through more appropriate planning. We work every day so New Jerseyans can enjoy our state's landscapes, own a home, spend less time commuting to work and visit one of our state's quaint, revitalized downtowns.

This newsletter will serve as a Smart Growth resource so you can keep track of our Smart Growth efforts, current events, county and municipal Smart Growth initiatives, and many other topics that deal with New Jersey's future through Smart Growth.

Over the years, New Jersey's landscapes have changed - some for the good; some for the bad. But good or bad, the past has taught us that we now, more than ever, need to look to our future. Through planning and by working together - with the state, counties, municipalities, businesses, nonprofits and citizens - we can truly make Smart Growth work for New Jersey.

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## New Jersey Counties Plan for a Smart Future

*by Curt Lavalla, AICP*



*Many New Jersey mayors flank Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Levin during one of their many Smart Growth announcements. They have made announcements across the state highlighting New Jersey's efforts to help towns and counties prepare for the future by implementing regional planning strategies and utilizing Smart Growth tools.*

In a continued effort to promote regional planning in Governor McGreevey's Smart Growth agenda, DCA Commissioner Susan Bass Levin has awarded more than \$2.5 million in Smart Future Planning Grants since February 2003. These grants are funded through DCA's Office of Smart Growth and provide county and municipal planners access to state experts from DCA, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Transportation (DOT), as well as funds to work with outside consultants with specialized expertise.

*continued on page 2*

**See  
Smart  
Future  
planning  
in action  
across  
New Jersey  
on pages  
4 & 5**

### NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS



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## Greetings from State Planning Commission Chairman Tim Touhey and Office of Smart Growth Executive Director Adam Zellner

Welcome to DCA's first edition of *Smart Growth, NJ*. To best serve Governor McGreevey's Smart Growth initiative, we want to keep you well informed and up-to-date on the Office of Smart Growth and the State Planning Commission's activities. We are proud to say that Smart Growth is already working in New Jersey.

You will read about DCA's Smart Future Initiative, the Mayors Institute, the Greyfields Task Force and our current Plan Endorsement process. Each of these articles, and all of the information in our newsletter, serve to show you how Smart Growth is working throughout our state.

We hope you enjoy this first edition of *Smart Growth, NJ*. With guidance and great enthusiasm from Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Levin, the Office of Smart Growth and the State Planning Commission are truly making Smart Growth a reality across our state.

  
Tim Touhey  
Chairman  
State Planning Commission

  
Adam Zellner  
Executive Director  
Office of Smart Growth

### Smart Future

...from Page 1

"Governor McGreevey recognizes that regional planning is integral to solving the problems of sprawl and over-development in our State," Commissioner Levin said. "If we are to preserve our quality of life in New Jersey, we must work together to cooperatively and comprehensively manage growth. Smart Future grants make that possible."

To see  
Smart Future Planning Grants  
in action across the state,  
see the map on pages 4 and 5.

### Greetings ...from Page 1

We encourage you to read *Smart Growth, NJ*, participate in related meetings and conferences, and contact the Office of Smart Growth to learn more about what we are doing and how you can contribute to New Jersey's future through Smart Growth planning.

With all good wishes,

  
James E. McGreevey  
Governor  
State of New Jersey

  
Susan Bass Levin  
Commissioner  
NJ Department of  
Community Affairs



DCA Commissioner Susan Bass Levin announces Smart Future Planning Grants at (top to bottom) Bergen and Monmouth Counties.



For Smart Future Planning Grant Information,  
Contact Curt Lavalla, AICP, at (609) 633-9648.

# Addressing the Grey Area Between Brownfields and Greenfields

**Like most things in life, nothing is black and white. Redevelopment is no exception.**

*by Gloria Frederick, PhD*

Brownfields are defined as any vacant or underutilized commercial or industrial site that is contaminated, or thought to be contaminated. Greenfields are defined as expanses of land with a vegetative cover and few, if any, physical structures.

So, what are the areas in our towns that fall in between? You guessed it...they are called greyfields.

More specifically, greyfields are developed sites that are economically and physically 'ripe' for major redevelopment. Most times, greyfields are strip malls or other retail properties that have been abandoned, but could be revitalized to become strong economic assets to their communities.

To address greyfields redevelopment, DCA's Office of Smart Growth

is establishing a Greyfields Task Force. The Task Force is being designed to address the problem of abandoned or underutilized sites - particularly vacant, suburban strip centers - across the state. The goal is to provide municipalities with assistance to convert these sites back into ratable-producing and modern mixed-use developments. Additionally, the Task Force wants to work with developers and retailers to help them identify these sites and coordinate the resources to redevelop them.

DCA's vision is that the Greyfields Task Force will:

1. Focus on developing abandoned strip malls
2. Examine existing regulations for redevelopment of abandoned properties
3. Identify sites that might be rede-

veloped and create an inventory that prioritizes development

4. Determine policies that will encourage development of these abandoned strip malls

This won't be easy, but by working together with state agencies, municipalities, counties, developers, retailers and nonprofit organizations, the Task Force is sure to make greyfields redevelopment projects as successful as possible.

New Jersey has embarked on a journey of preservation and revitalization under Governor McGreevey's Smart Growth initiative. The Greyfields Task Force will play a key role in creating an enduring quality of life for New Jersey citizens.

## Smart Growth Planning Retreat

**The New Jersey Mayors Institute on Community Design Provides Retreat Atmosphere to Focus on Smart Growth**

*by Carlos Rodrigues, AICP/PP*

DCA's OSG, with the help of the Regional Plan Association (RPA) and Princeton University, have taken an innovative approach to working with and teaching mayors about Smart Growth and planning. They organized a retreat to bring together mayors, planners, architects and others involved in the Smart Growth planning process.

The retreat, the New Jersey Mayors Institute on Community Design, is designed as an educational opportunity for New Jersey's mayors to learn more about how to use community design and how it can improve their communities, create better places to live, work and play, and promote the Governor's Smart Growth agenda.

Heading into its fifth year, the Institute is a joint venture among DCA's OSG, the RPA and Princeton University, with additional support provided by the NJ League of Municipalities, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the American Planning Association - NJ Chapter, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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*The June 2003 Mayors Institute — mayors, experts and staff.*

**OSG and RPA are currently in the process of recruiting mayors to attend the next Institute, which is anticipated for January 2004. Please contact Carlos Rodrigues, New Jersey Mayors Institute on Community Design project manager, at (609) 292-3097.**

# Smart Future Planning Across New Jersey

Franklin Borough and Hardyston Township are using their \$40,000 grant for the Main Street Revitalization Strategy, which will recreate a downtown business district that serves both communities. The Main Street Revitalization Strategy will improve economic development efforts in the area, help to preserve historic structures in the region, and create more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly pathways along their Main Street.

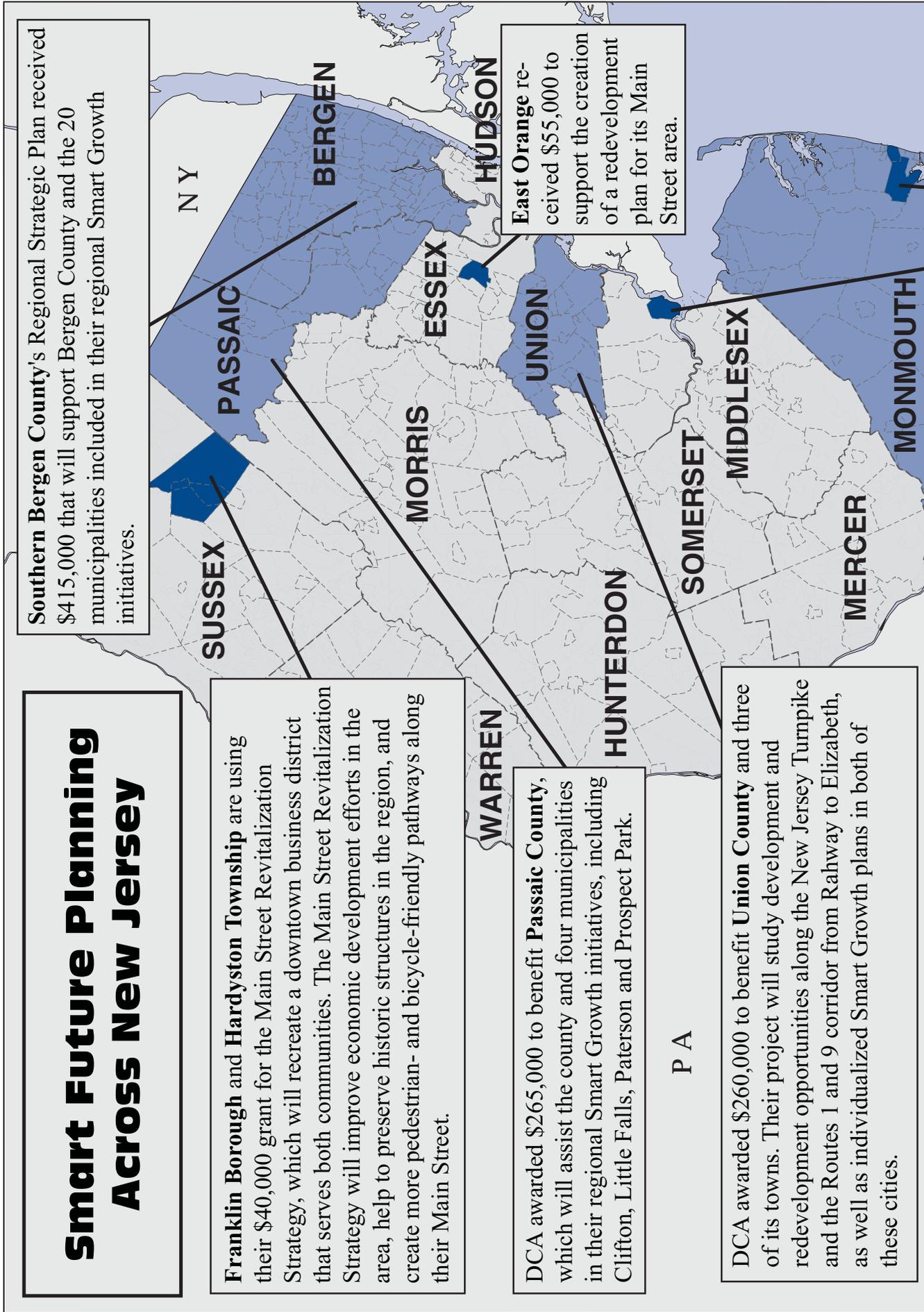
DCA awarded \$265,000 to benefit Passaic County, which will assist the county and four municipalities in their regional Smart Growth initiatives, including Clifton, Little Falls, Paterson and Prospect Park.

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DCA awarded \$260,000 to benefit Union County and three of its towns. Their project will study development and redevelopment opportunities along the New Jersey Turnpike and the Routes 1 and 9 corridor from Rahway to Elizabeth, as well as individualized Smart Growth plans in both of these cities.

Southern Bergen County's Regional Strategic Plan received \$415,000 that will support Bergen County and the 20 municipalities included in their regional Smart Growth initiatives.

East Orange received \$55,000 to support the creation of a redevelopment plan for its Main Street area.



The \$458,000 in grants to **Monmouth County** will support the county and 40 municipalities in their regional Smart Growth initiatives. "Monmouth County truly serves as a microcosm of New Jersey's regional Smart Growth efforts," said Commissioner Levin.

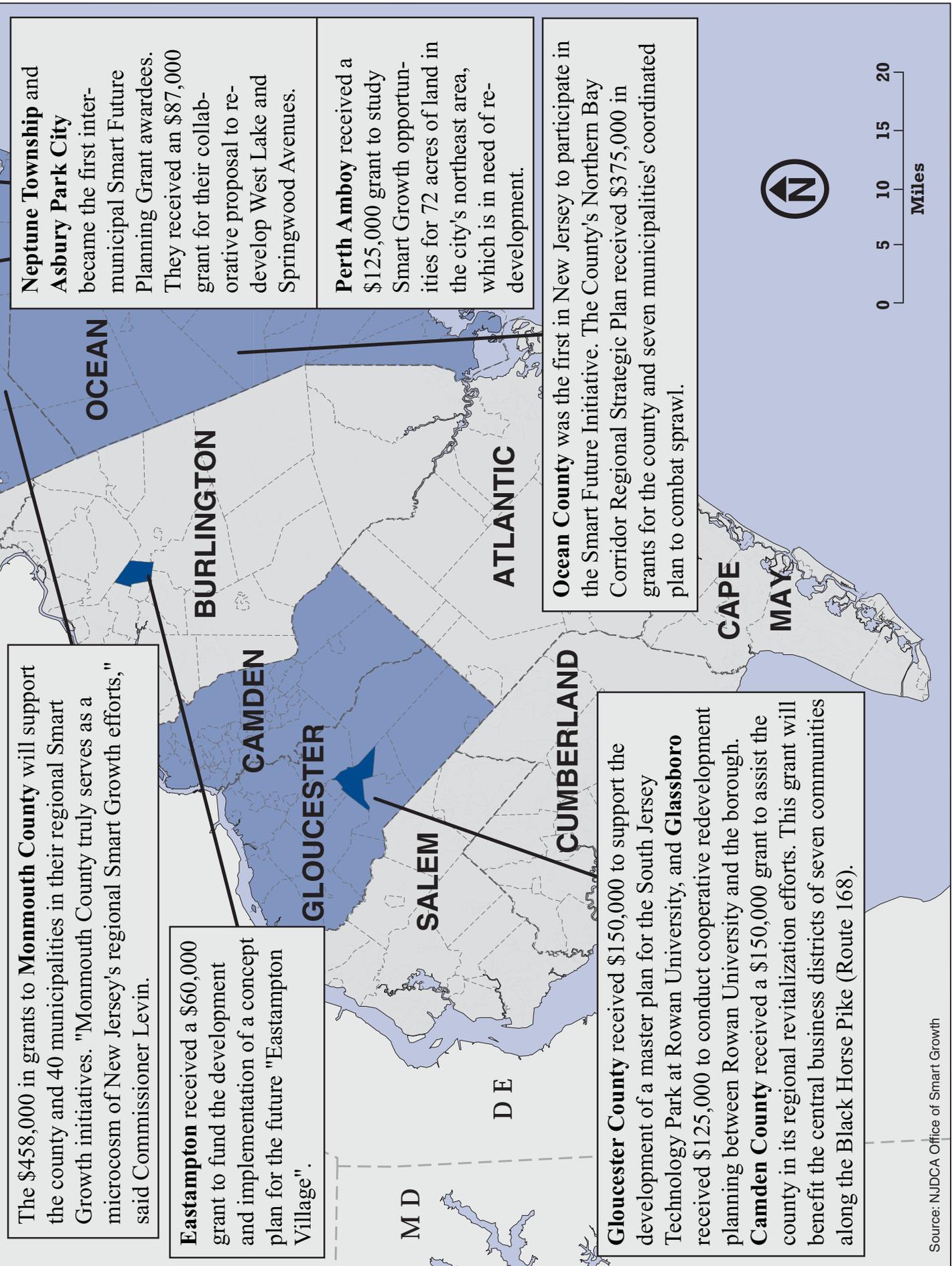
**Eastampton** received a \$60,000 grant to fund the development and implementation of a concept plan for the future "Eastampton Village".

**Gloucester County** received \$150,000 to support the development of a master plan for the South Jersey Technology Park at Rowan University, and **Glassboro** received \$125,000 to conduct cooperative redevelopment planning between Rowan University and the borough. **Camden County** received a \$150,000 grant to assist the county in its regional revitalization efforts. This grant will benefit the central business districts of seven communities along the Black Horse Pike (Route 168).

**Neptune Township** and **Asbury Park City** became the first inter-municipal Smart Future Planning Grant awardees. They received an \$87,000 grant for their collaborative proposal to redevelop West Lake and Springwood Avenues.

**Perth Amboy** received a \$125,000 grant to study Smart Growth opportunities for 72 acres of land in the city's northeast area, which is in need of re-development.

**Ocean County** was the first in New Jersey to participate in the Smart Future Initiative. The County's Northern Bay Corridor Regional Strategic Plan received \$375,000 in grants for the county and seven municipalities' coordinated plan to combat sprawl.



Source: NJDCA Office of Smart Growth

# Giving a Voice for the Future of New Jersey

## Cross-Acceptance and Plan Endorsement

by Charles Latini, AICP/PP  
and Megan Lang

Giving residents and local governments a voice in the planning of New Jersey's future is critically important. That is why Governor McGreevey, through DCA's Office of Smart Growth and the State Planning Commission, is providing residents, municipalities, counties, regional entities, and other constituents an opportunity for their voices to be heard through the Cross-acceptance and Plan Endorsement processes. These processes are outlined in the New Jersey Development and Redevelopment Plan, also known as the State Plan.

The State Plan is designed to serve as a guide for New Jersey's future. The Plan provides for the maintenance and preservation of New Jersey's abundant natural, cultural, economic and social assets, and anticipated development and growth. New Jersey, a strong home rule state, has the opportunity, through the State Planning process, to reach beyond municipal and county boundaries and look regionally at planning and directing our future. Two tools that will help lead us to this plan are the Cross-acceptance process and the Plan Endorsement process. Both Cross-acceptance and Plan Endorsement are voluntary processes. But the State Planning Commission and Office of Smart Growth anticipate a high level of participation in the processes because of the benefits discussed below for towns who participate.

Cross-acceptance is the mechanism used by the State Planning Commission to update information in the State Planning Map and to collect information and feedback from local officials and the public about how they want their communities to grow and be preserved. Cross-acceptance describes the collaborative process of proposing, reviewing and then accepting information and revisions to the plan. It is a give and take between State agencies, municipalities, counties and the public. It fosters true planning partnerships at all levels of government and it ensures the public's input throughout the process. The result of the Cross-acceptance process is updated information

The planning assistance unit of the Office of Smart Growth is available to assist municipal, county and regional entities in both the Cross-acceptance and the Plan Endorsement processes. To learn more about Cross-acceptance and Plan Endorsement or any of the other programs in the Office of Smart Growth, contact your Area Planning Representative or visit us on-line at <http://nj.gov/dca/osg/>



*Governor McGreevey is committed to listening to New Jersey's residents and constituents, especially when it comes to planning for New Jersey's future through smart growth. Cross-Acceptance is the way to be sure that everyone is heard.*

needed to create the blueprint for a new State Plan. Because of the work done locally, the ultimate State Plan ensures that statewide planning policies and local visions for the future support each other.

Plan Endorsement is the vehicle for applying the planning efforts of all levels of government at the local level. It is comprehensive long-range planning which sets the agenda for an entire municipality, county or regional entity, consistent with the State Plan. In the past, the State Planning Commission focused on designating "Centers." This process often resulted in high quality plans for the center but did not consider the areas outside of the center or regional impact. Plan Endorsement involves a series of meetings and completed or proposed plans that the locality commits to carry out by working with their regional partners and the State. The plans include environmental issues, natural resource inventories, preservation goals, future growth targets, transportation plans (that address local and regional issues) and community visions.

Entities that receive Plan Endorsement will be entitled to a variety of benefits, both regulatory and financial. They will include priority for state funding, coordination of planning with other agencies, expedited permit review and state capital project construction. The Plan Endorsement process will provide consistency and coordination among all levels of government with state and endorsed plans.

An additional benefit of Cross-acceptance and Plan Endorsement is that they enhance collective and cooperative

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The Office of Smart Growth will soon start Cross-acceptance III and begin accepting petitions for Plan Endorsement. For more information, visit the State Plan link at <http://nj.gov/dca/osg/plan/index.shtml>.

Twice a year, different groups of six NJ mayors spend two days in retreat, discussing planning and community design issues that affect their communities. The mayors are joined at a panel by national experts in community design, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, real estate development and transportation, as well as OSG and RPA staff.

One focus of the retreat is municipal case studies. Each mayor brings a specific case study from his or her town that features a design issue. After a brief introduction of the community and presentation of the design issue, the mayors, experts and staff engage in a discussion, which is invariably lively and thought provoking. The intent of this exercise is clearly not to find a definitive solution for complex issues in a very short period of time, but rather to bring to the forefront some clear, creative thinking that can inspire mayors and staff alike to take a fresh look at the issues and potential solutions.

Each Institute also includes a large event that is open to the public, with a noted design advocate as keynote speaker.

While the Institute can be instrumental in bringing creative thinking to community design issues, OSG is mindful of the need to support follow-up activities that take a project to fruition. Planning grants, design charrettes, design studios and interagency coordination are among the resources that OSG makes available to participating municipalities to keep their projects' momentum going.

As with many retreats, everyone emerges energized and has a new sense of the possibilities. The Mayors Institute is an innovative approach to community design and regional planning supporting New Jersey's Smart Growth.



Mayor Torres of Paterson presents his case study -- how to reuse a delapidated public stadium adjacent to the Great Falls district.

## Smart Growth Reaches Downtown



Carmen Valentin, Darcy Horner and Jef Buehler (left to right) staff the DCA booth at the Downtown New Jersey Annual Conference in Summit on June 12, 2003. This year's conference theme was "Smart Growth Downtown" and focused on downtown districts using Smart Growth planning principles and strategies for redevelopment. Commissioners Levin and Campbell were among other administration senior staff on a panel discussing Governor McGreevey's Smart Growth initiative, how it works and why we need it for the future of New Jersey and its downtown districts.

planning for growth and development on a regional basis. Lack of a regional approach to planning has resulted in haphazard development across the state, eroding our tax base and, more importantly, our sense of community. Unplanned growth and sprawl cause detrimental impacts on traffic, school systems, our environment, and our quality of life. But New Jersey is now uniquely positioned to become a model for effective regional planning. The Office of Smart Growth encourages regional partnerships, whether intermunicipal, countywide, or statewide, to ease development pressures and ensure a better future for our citizens. The integration and coordination of our planning efforts at all governmental levels will make for the best use of our energies and fiscal resources.

To make all of our visions a reality, we must do our part by coordinating the plans and regulations of all levels of government and ensuring quality land-use decisions. Cross-acceptance and Plan Endorsement give communities a voice and tools with which to actively participate in shaping New Jersey's future.

## Cross-Acceptance

As 2003 draws to a close, we are entering a new year of the State Plan. Cross-acceptance is a valuable tool that gives towns the ability to make changes to the State Plan Map. With this tool, each one of New Jersey's 566 municipalities now has a voice in the state's future planning. The Cross-acceptance process begins in March 2004, along with the release of the preliminary State Plan. In anticipation of this, the OSG will be sending out the current State Plan map, along with mapped information provided by the DOT, DEP and Agriculture later this fall.

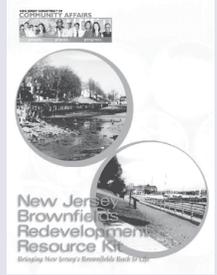
Between March and September 2004, counties and municipalities will be involved in comparing the old and new State Plans, and making suggestion as to what changes should be made to the map or its policies. From September to December, "negotiations" will take place to help make the State Plan consistent with municipal and county plans. Finally,

from January through May 2005, the new final State Plan will be drafted, reviewed and adopted by the State Planning Commission.

See full text article on pg. 6

## NJ Brownfields Redevelopment Resource Kit

DCA's new Brownfields Redevelopment Resource Kit is now available online for your use. This kit is a step-by-step manual of how to get started, work through a specific site, and even find out where to get technical and financial assistance! Visit the resource kit online at:



<http://nj.gov/dca/osg/commissions/brownfields/>



### Smart Growth, NJ

A publication of the NJ Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth  
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 Vol. 1, Issue 1, Fall 2003

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